



MARIPOSA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors • 209-966-3222



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2015-446

MEETING: September 15, 2015

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

RE: Resolution Proclaiming the Existence of a Tree Mortality Local
Emergency

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Approve a Proclamation declaring the existence of a local emergency due to extremely high levels of tree mortality in Mariposa County.

The incidence of tree mortality in Mariposa County has been increasing at alarming rates. Estimates based on U.S. Forest Service aerial mapping and CalFire data indicate that approximately 54% of trees in the County are currently dead and it is expected that the proportion of dead and dying trees will increase to approximately 72% next year. Further estimates are that currently 200,000 acres of land are affected and that 465,000 acres will be affected in Mariposa County. The latter number constitutes about 50% of the County's land area. Given these numbers, it is apparent that tree mortality is destroying many of the forested areas that make Mariposa County so attractive to tourists. Most of the high levels of tree mortality are directly attributable to insect infestations. It is also clear that factors such as poor precipitation levels and warmer winters over the last four years have negatively impacted tree viability. However, this tree mortality disaster will continue regardless of future precipitation levels. Even if the County enjoys a wet winter, many of the standing dead trees will fall, thereby creating further threats to public safety. The County's resources are insufficient to address a disaster of this magnitude.

Per capita - we have 18,000 people in Mariposa County and have spent close to a million dollars (public and private) on the tree issue. There are approximately 180,000 people (Eldorado or Shasta County) spending \$10 million on trees
Or 1.8 million people (Riverside or Sacramento Counties) spending \$100 million on trees.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors approved the formation of the Mariposa County Tree Mortality Disaster Mitigation Committee on July 7, 2015. One of the first actions undertaken by the Committee was the preparation of this declaration and the

Committee recommends that the Board approve it. The Board has approved similar declarations during other emergencies

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

If the Board does not declare a local emergency, the Governor may not proclaim a state of emergency and Mariposa County may not be eligible for possible State or Federal disaster assistance.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The financial impact from the first of this year to present on public safety actions regarding tree mortality and mitigative action have amounted to over a quarter of a million dollars. Private funds from grants and other public agencies along with private citizen's costs this year are estimated to be well over a million dollars. As tree mortality increases so will the costs to mitigate the problem; this cost will increase exponentially. State resources and potential funding is needed to assist the cleanup and mitigation of this disaster.

ATTACHMENTS:

Declaration - Tree Mortality R7(DOCX)

Areas with elevation and fuel loading - Mariposa Co. (DOCX)

Tree Mortality injured or killed(DOCX)

AMENDED DEC - Tree Mortality R8 (PDF)

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Requested Action Recommended



Mary Hodson, CAO

9/10/2015

RESULT: ADOPTED AS AMENDED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

SECONDER: John Carrier, District V Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier

**DECLARATION PROCLAIMING THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY AND
REQUESTING THAT THE GOVERNOR (1) PROCLAIM A STATE OF EMERGENCY
AND (2) REQUEST A PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, Section 8630 of the Government Code and Chapter 2.80 of the Mariposa County Code empowers the Board of Supervisors to proclaim the existence of a Local Emergency within the County when said County is affected or is likely to be affected by the existence or threatened existence of conditions of emergency or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors does hereby find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within Mariposa County, caused by the widespread and rapidly increasing incidence of tree mortality which commenced on or about June 1, 2013; and

WHEREAS, local resources have been deployed to all areas within Mariposa County, thereby depleting fuels management assets and response resources and these local emergency, fuel mitigation and fire prevention agencies and organizations are faced with a disaster that exceeds their functional capabilities because of the rapid increase in tree mortality throughout Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, unprecedented tree mortality is causing damage to the watershed and emergency egress points, to County and other public and district facilities including, but not limited to, roads and structures, which damages cannot yet be calculated; and

WHEREAS, data collected by state and federal agencies demonstrate that tree mortality in Mariposa County has reached epidemic levels, today affecting 410,000 trees (54% of all trees and 21% of Mariposa's land area) and substantiating expected increases in this year to 550,000 trees (72% of all trees and 50% of our land area) as well as further increases in the future and these stands of dead/dying trees constitute extremely dangerous levels of combustible fuels which contribute to the severity and scale of wildland fires; and

WHEREAS, even if Mariposa were to experience normal or higher levels of precipitation this winter, this disaster will continue unabated, or escalate, during the next five to six years due to the standing dead trees that will fall, thereby constituting immediate threats to public safety, egress and private homes and other structures; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that Mariposa implement full scale, immediate and aggressive measures to isolate and fell dead/dying trees resulting from factors including, but not limited to, pine beetles and other tree parasites and treat the stumps with insecticide in order to begin to reduce the risks to public safety, egress and structures as well as the destruction of the forested communities that are critical to our economy; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors does find that the aforesaid conditions of extreme peril warrant and necessitate the proclamation of a Local Emergency and that local resources are unable to cope with the effects of this extreme peril;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY DECLARED by the Board of Supervisors that a Local Emergency exists throughout Mariposa County and that said Local Emergency shall be deemed to continue to exist until its termination is proclaimed by the Board of Supervisors; and

IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED that during the existence of the Local Emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the Director of Emergency Services and the emergency services organization of the County shall be those prescribed by state law, by ordinances and by resolutions of Mariposa County approved by the Board of Supervisors; and

IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND REQUESTED that the Governor of the State of California find and proclaim Mariposa County to be in a State of Emergency and that he/she request a Presidential Declaration of Emergency for Mariposa County; and

IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND REQUESTED that the State of California facilitate and support interagency coordination across local, state and federal levels to promote access to resources such as expertise, equipment and manpower that are necessary to remove, store (where appropriate) and dispose of dead and dying trees using economically and environmentally sustainable methods in order to restore forest and watershed health; and

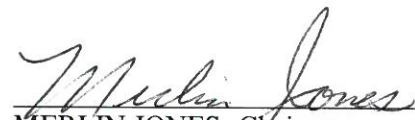
IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND REQUESTED that the State of California coordinate with federal and local agencies to ensure that financial assistance is available to address immediate threats to public safety and to expand, develop and make available financial tools for private landowners and private enterprises to develop capacity to reduce and manage those threats; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this Declaration be forwarded to the State Director of the Office of Emergency Services; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the County Administrative Officer and Emergency Services Officer, or her designee, is hereby designated as the local Hazard Mitigation Coordinator and authorized representative of the County of Mariposa for the purpose of assessing damage, consulting with federal/state survey teams regarding hazard mitigation actions, processing and coordination of all inquiries necessary to obtain available state and federal assistance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of Mariposa County, a political subdivision of the State of California, on this 15th day of 2015, by the following vote:

AYES: SMALLCOMBE, JONES, LONG, CANN, CARRIER
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE


MERLIN JONES, Chairman
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
Director of Emergency Services

ATTEST:


RENE LaROCHE
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


STEVEN W. DAHLEM
County Counsel

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ... ROSEMARIE SMALLCOMBE
District 2 MERLIN JONES
District 3 MARSHALL LONG
District 4 KEVIN CANN
District 5 JOHN CARRIER



MARY HODSON
County Administrative Officer

RENE LAROCHE
Clerk of the Board

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September 15, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capital Building, Sacramento, CA 95814

Via: Mark Ghilarducci
Director, California State Office of Emergency Services
3650 Schriever Avenue
Mather, CA 95655

Dear Governor Brown:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you declare a state of emergency for Mariposa County based on unprecedented tree mortality which has created extraordinary threats to public safety. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors has declared this local emergency due to tree mortality rates currently at 54% and expected to increase to 72% in the first half of next year. These epidemic levels of tree mortality create extremely dangerous levels of combustible fuels and, even if Mariposa receives normal precipitation this winter, the standing dead trees will constitute significant threats to public safety when they begin to fall. Enclosed are two copies of Mariposa County's Declaration proclaiming the existence of a local emergency, requesting a Governor's declaration of a state of emergency for the County of Mariposa, and requesting a Presidential Declaration of a state of emergency for the County of Mariposa.

Very truly yours,

Merlin Jones
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Enclosures

Cc: Congressman Tom McClintock
Senator Tom Berryhill
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Assemblyman Frank Bigelow
Supervisor Randy Hanvelt (Tuolumne County)
Supervisor John Gray (Tuolumne County)
Supervisor Tom Wheeler (Madera County)
Supervisor Debbie Poochigian (Fresno County)
Supervisor Stacy Corless (Mono County)
Supervisor Lynn Morgan (Amador County)
Supervisor Chris Wright (Calaveras County)
Matt Cate, Executive Director California State Association of Counties
Patricia Megason, Executive Vice President, Rural County Representatives of
California
Ken Pimlott, Director, CAL FIRE
NACO